

Edmund de Schweinitz

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A History  
of  
The Unitas Fratrum  
From 1627 to 1722

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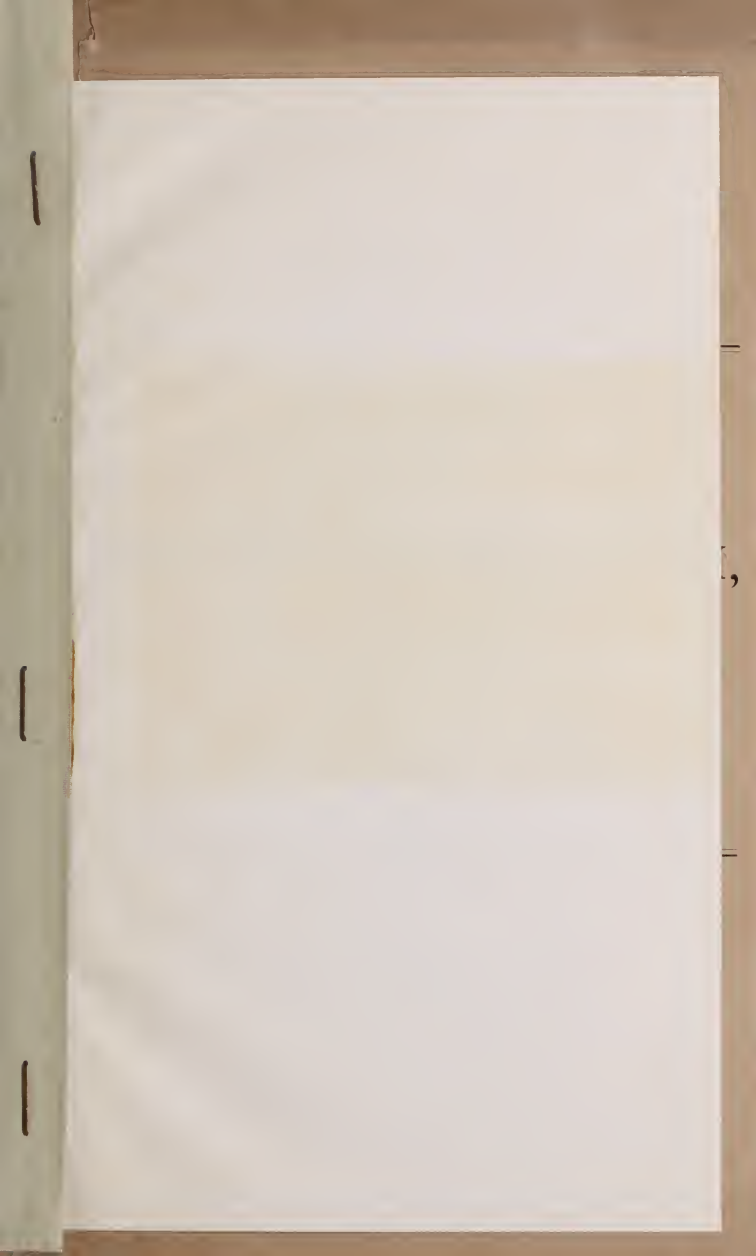
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OF  
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BY EDMUND DE SCHWEINITZ, S. T. D.,  
Bishop of the Church.

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A HISTORY

OF

# THE UNITAS FRATRUM,

FROM ITS

OVERTHROW IN BOHEMIA AND MORAVIA

TO ITS

RENEWAL AT HERRNHUT,

1627 to 1722,

BASED UPON SOURCES NOT HERETOFORE DRAWN FROM, AND SHOWING THAT  
THE TIME OF THE HIDDEN SEED MUST BE REDUCED TO LESS  
THAN A QUARTER OF A CENTURY.

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By EDMUND DE SCHWEINITZ, S. T. D.  
Bishop of the Church.

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BETHLEHEM:  
MORAVIAN PUBLICATION OFFICE.  
1877.



# THE UNITAS FRATRUM,

FROM 1627 to 1722.

The history of the Unitas Fratrum from the end of the Bohemian Anti-reformation, in 1627, which was the occasion of its overthrow in its original seats, to its resuscitation at Herrnhut, in Saxony, in 1722, is involved in much obscurity. Some of our authorized works, as for instance, *Cranz's History of the Brethren*, and *Holmes' History of the Protestant Church of the United Brethren*, say very little about this era. The most complete account of it is found in *John Plitt's MS. History of the Unitas Fratrum*, and has been substantially reproduced in the *Geschichte der Alten Brüderkirche*, by Bishop Croeger, 2 vols., Gnadau, 1865 and 1866.

Plitt sets forth the following periods of our church-history :

The history of the Ancient Church from 1457 to 1627; the history of the Hidden Seed, from 1627 to 1722; the history of the Renewed Church, from 1722 to the present time. These divisions have been adopted by all our writers since his day, and by all those Professors who lecture on Brethren's History in our Theological Seminaries. In preparing my own lectures for the Seminary at Bethlehem, I have been led, as touching the second period, namely, that of the Hidden Seed, to conclusions which differ entirely from those of Plitt, and other German writers, but especially from those which are found in Bishop

Croeger's *Geschichte der Alten Brüderkirche*. Having communicated the results of my investigations in a paper read, some time ago, before a ministerial circle at Bethlehem, I was asked to publish them. Accordingly I herewith present that paper in a modified form.

In doing this I beg the indulgence of my brethren in Germany who have written or lectured on the same subject, and hope that they will look upon my criticisms merely as an effort to reach the truth, and as a humble contribution toward a future history of that period of the Ancient Church of which I am treating. I may say this with all confidence, because such criticisms will recoil, first of all, upon myself, in as much as I taught, in my earlier lectures, the very same points which I now refute, and published them in the *Moravian Manual*, as also in other works.

There are, I suppose, few intelligent readers of our history who do not lament the length of time which is said to have elapsed between the destruction of the Ancient and the founding of the Renewed Church. For five years less than a century the Unitas Fratrum, it is asserted, existed only as Hidden Seed. If there really was such a gulf between the Ancient and the Renewed Church, and if it was bridged over only by the episcopacy, is the claim of the latter to be organically connected with

the former as strong as we would wish it to be? And when answering the inquiries of others, do we not sometimes find it hard to explain, in a satisfactory manner, how a church could exist as a Hidden Seed, without any visible organization whatsoever, for so long a time, and then suddenly reappear, with a visible organization, and take its former place in Christendom?

It will, therefore, be the object of this article to try to show :

*First*, that the Ancient Brethren's Church, when it had been overthrown in Bohemia and Moravia, in 1627, did not come to an end, but continued to exist in other countries, as a fully organized Unitas Fratrum, for twenty nine years longer.

*Second*, that even after its new centre of government had been destroyed, in 1656, and it had received that blow from which it never recovered, it nevertheless remained a visible and independent church to the very end of the seventeenth century, and disappeared very gradually.

*Third*, that the period of the real Hidden Seed, that is, the time in which, as far as we know, there existed no churches at all of the Brethren, instead of extending through ninety-five years, must be reduced to less than twenty-five.

In discussing these points I will refer to some authorities which have but recently come to my knowledge, and which, together with others that I have had for some years, have helped chiefly to shape my views. These authorities are : 1st, *Lukasezewich's Geschichte der Kirche der Böhmischen Brüder in Grosspolen*, Posen, 1835, a work which I have in vain tried to secure, but copious extracts from which I have found in : 2nd, *Fischer's Versuch einer Geschichte der Reformation in Polen*, 2 vols., Grätz, 1855 ; 3rd, *Historical Sketch of the Rise, Progress and Decline of the Reformation in Poland*, by Count Krasinski, 2 vols., London, 1840 ; 4th, *Sketch of the Religious History of the Slavonic Nations*, by the

same author, Edinburgh, 1851 ; 5th, an *Article on Amos Comenius*, by Palacky, published in 1829, in the "*Monatschrift der Gesellschaft des Vaterländischen Museums, in Böhmen*;" 6th, an *Article by Gindley, on Amos Comenius* published in 1855, in the *Sitzungsbericht der Kaiserlichen Akademie der Wissenschaften*, Vienna ; 7th, *The Life of Comenius by Daniel Benham*, London, 1858. To these must be added two older and well known sources, namely, *Regenvolssei Systema historico-chronologicum Ecclesiarum Slavonicarum, Ultrajecti*, 1652, and the sixth volume of *Rieger's Böhmische Brüderhistorie*.

#### THE HISTORY OF THE UNITAS FRATRUM FROM 1627 TO 1656.

In the year 1627, the Bohemian Anti-reformation, inaugurated by Ferdinand II, came practically to an end, resulting in the complete overthrow of Protestantism in Bohemia and Moravia, the emigration of many thousands of Protestants, of whom a large part were Brethren, and the overthrow of the Unitas Fratrum in its original seats. In the same year, according to our German writers, its Polish Province united with the Reformed Church of Poland, and disappeared as a distinct and independent organization. This year, consequently, is set forth as the last of its history proper, and here, it is said, the history of its Hidden Seed begins.

The *Geschichte der Alten Brüderkirche*, p. 346, following Plitt, says : "At the close of this same year (1627), in which the Brethren's Church of Bohemia and Moravia received its last blow through the edict of July 31st, the Brethren in Great Poland themselves put an end to the former independence of their church, and amalgamated with the Reformed Church of that country." Again, p. 347, "Thus the fields of the Brethren's Unity which had flowered so pleasantly and hopefully in Bohemia and Moravia were trodden down and laid waste ;

while in Poland nothing whatever could be recognized of that tillage upon which so much care had been bestowed." Again, p. 349: "A time of humble waiting, prolonged for one hundred years, was to come before the Lord would redeem His captive people." And in another place, p. 351: "The history of the Brethren's Church, as an ecclesiastical union which seceded from the Romish Establishment and entered into a close fellowship with the Evangelical Church, has, properly speaking, reached its end with the year 1627. For it was destroyed in Bohemia and Moravia, and, in Poland, it disappeared among the other evangelical churches. Single remnants only remained, ruins of the city of God, amidst which we hear a venerable bishop bewailing the fall of his people, and, at the same time, invoking, like Jeremiah, the God of his fathers for a new season of grace and glory, when the time of well-deserved chastisement should be over." In the same strain, although very briefly, Burkhardt, in his *Zinzendorf und die Brüdergemeine*, says, p. 3: "In the year 1627 the Brethren's Unity no longer existed. For in Poland, too, where it had spread since 1548, it had succumbed, about the same time, *i. e.*, 1627, to the intrigues of the Jesuits."

According to these authorities, therefore, first, the Polish branch of the *Unitas Fratrum* was absorbed by the Reformed Church, in 1627, or, as one of them says, destroyed by the Jesuits; second, its exiled members from Bohemia and Moravia did not reorganize; hence, third, there existed no Brethren's Church after that date. These positions a subsequent statement of the *Geschichte der Alten Brüderkirche*, p. 359, merely modifies, and does not controvert. That authority says, that a church of exiles was formed at Lissa, and that it seemed as if the Brethren's Unity were again to revive at that place and to embrace representatives of the three nations from which

its membership was originally made up, namely, the Bohemian, German and Polish, adding that the Brethren found a second asylum at Wlodawa, in Lithuania. Indeed this brief reference to Lissa is hardly to be understood even as a modification of what has been previously said. The whole spirit of the narrative shows, again and again, that the Church is deemed to be extinct.

Let us examine these positions critically.

In order to a proper comprehension of what follows, it may be well to remember that Poland, at the time of which I am treating, was divided into the following three provinces: namely, Great Poland, to which belonged Cujavia, Masovia, and Polish Prussia; Little Poland; and Lithuania, including Samogitia, Szamaiten, and Courland.

Now an investigation of the sources shows, in the first place, that, in 1627, the Polish branch of the *Unitas Fratrum* was not absorbed by a part of the Reformed Church of Great Poland, but, just the contrary, that a part of the Reformed Church of Great Poland, namely that of Cujavia, was absorbed by the Polish branch of the *Unitas Fratrum*. For Regenvolscius, p. 120, speaking of a union-synod held at Ostrorog by the Brethren and the Reformed of Cujavia, in December of 1627, says: "For then the Helvetians (*i. e.* Reformed), their Senior, Daniel Micolajovius, their Cousenior, Jacob Gembicius, and others, united, or coalesced (*coaluerunt*), with the Bohemian Brethren in one order and discipline, and this in such a way, that, from that time, they held the same assemblies and the same synods, governed by common councils, and were called by a common name the Brethren of the Unity." Now if the Brethren had disappeared among the Reformed, would not Regenvolscius have said: "The Bohemian Brethren coalesced with the Helvetians in one order and discipline," and not, "the Helvetians coalesced with the Bohemian Breth-

ren?" (In unum ordinem et disciplinam coaluerunt cum Fratribus Bohemicis Helveticis.)

In order, however, that there may be no doubt on this point, Fischer, going more into details of the case, presents the following narrative, *Geschichte d. Ref., in Polen*, II, p. 157: "The most important of the many synods held by the Bohemian Brethren was undoubtedly the one which convened at Ostrorog, in December of 1627; for on that occasion the Calvinists of Great Poland actually went over to, or, rather, were really amalgamated with, the Bohemian Brethren. We have, in preceding pages, set forth that the most of the evangelical churches of Cujavia succumbed to the Romish bishops Karnkowski and Rozrazewski, and that, at last, the important centre at Radziejow was destroyed, on the 26th of March, 1615, by order of Bishop Wolucki. Thereupon Daniel Mikolajewski, the Reformed Senior, and Jacob Gembicki, the Consenior, felt themselves constrained, for the sake of the greater safety and strength which it would give them, to carry out that plan of amalgamation for which the way had been prepared at an earlier time, especially at the Synod of the Bohemian Brethren held on the 8th of September, 1620, at Ostrorog. Accordingly, they went over, with their remaining seven parishes and church edifices, as Wengierski says, in *unitatem fratrum confessionis Bohemicæ*. Mikolajewski entered the ranks of the Bohemian Brethren as a Superintendent, and the membership of their churches was, through the addition of these Reformed, increased by several hundred souls."

This history of the transaction at Ostrorog, in 1627, sets forth its true character. A remnant of Reformed churches in Cujavia was absorbed by the Polish branch of the Unitas Fratrum. Moreover, as if to make assurance doubly sure, we are told by Regenvolscius, p. 322, that, before the Synod adjourned, Mikolajewski was consecrated a

bishop of the Unitas Fratrum. The officiating bishops were John Turnovius, Martin Gratian Gertich, and, in all probability, John Cyrill, the presiding bishop. If the Polish branch of the Unitas Fratrum had been absorbed, on this occasion, by the Reformed, is it likely that the Reformed Superintendent would have been constituted a Bishop of the extinct church? Is it not far more probable that the Bishops of the Polish Brethren would thereafter have been known merely as Reformed Superintendents?

Nor was the consecration of Mikolajewski a solitary instance. The continued independence of the Polish branch of the Unitas Fratrum is, furthermore, conclusively shown by the fact, that within its communion other Bishops were, from time to time, elected and consecrated, not, as the *Geschichte der Alten Brüder Kirche*, p. 421, intimates, in the persons of Reformed Superintendents, but as Bishops of the Unitas Fratrum, with all the functions and privileges of this office. The above authority says very little of these bishops; nor are their biographies found in any other Moravian work. Hence, before proceeding with the argument, I will give a brief account of them.

The first was Paul Paliurus, born in Moravia, and educated in the most celebrated schools and universities of Germany and Switzerland. At the age of twenty-two years he was appointed rector of the school at Lobsenz, in Poland, and subsequently, labored for twenty years as pastor of the Brethren's Church at Grebocin, near Thorn. He was elected and consecrated a bishop on the 6th of July, 1629, at the Synod of Lissa, by Bishop John Cyrill, Gregory Erastus, and others, and took up his residence at Ostrorog, where he died November 27th, 1632. The only thing which the *Geschichte der Alten Brüderkirche* says of him is, that he translated the Bible into Polish. But this is a mistake. The ver-

sion to which the *Geschichte* refers was a mere revision of an old translation, undertaken by Mikolajewski and John Turnovius, and not by Paliurus. (Fischer II. p. 184.)

The second bishop was Martin Orminius born at Wiernszewo. He served a number of Brethren's churches in Great Poland, Cujavia, and Lithuania, until his elevation to the episcopacy, April 17, 1633, at the Synod of Ostrog. He died December 31, 1643.

The third was John Rybinski, a son of Bishop Matthias Rybinski, educated at Lissa and Thorn, and at several German universities. After graduating, he traveled extensively, as far as France and England, returning to Poland in 1623. He was ordained to the ministry at the Synod of Ostrog in 1625, appointed rector and Polish preacher at Lissa, and subsequently called to Kwilec and Grebocin. Elected and consecrated to the episcopacy at the same time with Orminius, he took up his abode at Ostrog. When this important seat succumbed to the intrigues of the Jesuits, and fell into their hands, in 1637, he went to Odrzycko, where he died September 13, 1638.

The fourth was Martin Gertich, a nephew of Bishop Martin Gratian Gertich, born 1591, at Lasswitz, and educated at Beuthen, in Silesia, and at Thorn. In 1640 he was elected an assistant bishop, and on the 16th of April, 1644, bishop, at the Synod of Lissa. There he took up his abode until the destruction of the town, when he fled to Silesia, and died at Ursk, December 10, 1658.

The fifth was John Buettner, elected and consecrated at the same time with Gertich. He was born in 1602, educated at Thorn, and had charge of various parishes of the Brethren prior to this elevation to the episcopacy. After that he took up his residence at Lissa. We will hear more of him in another connection.

All these men, as we have said, were, in every sense, bishops of the Polish branch of the *Unitas Fratrum*, and not Reformed ministers.

From what has thus far been set forth, I think, therefore, that the continued independence of this branch must be conceded, and the idea that it was absorbed, in 1627, by the Reformed Church, given up.

Turning in the next place to those Brethren who were exiled from Bohemia and Moravia, a further investigation of the sources shows, that, instead of losing themselves among other churches, *they reorganized and fully re-established their branch of the Unitas Fratrum*. The almost total silence of our authorized writers on this important point is hard to understand.

When driven out of Bohemia and Moravia the Brethren emigrated chiefly to Poland, Hungary, and Prussia. In these countries they organized about one hundred churches, exclusive of those which the Polish branch had previously had. There were, moreover, several old parishes in Silesia. More than one hundred ministers of the Bohemian-Moravian branch settled in Poland alone. All its bishops found a refuge there. They reorganized the Executive Council, a body corresponding in character to the Unity's Elders' Conference of the Renewed Church. Synods, both General and Provincial, were regularly held, and the transactions of many of them, beginning with the year 1632, are still extant, and have been gathered by Gindely in the *Dekreten der Brüderunität*, published in the *Monumenta Historiæ Bohemica*, Prague 1864 to 1870. The town of Lissa, at that time in Great Poland but now in Prussia, was constituted the new centre of the Church. There the Bishops and the Council had their seat. There an elementary school, which the Brethren had founded in earlier times, was raised to the rank of a Gymnasium, or College, and a full account of its work has come down to us. There a

Theological Seminary was added to it, in 1637, when the Brethren had lost their seat at Ostrorog, at which place it had formerly been located. And there, finally, a publication-office was opened.

These enterprises were rendered possible through the munificence of Count Raphael Leeinski, the lord of Lissa, and a member of the Brethren's Church, with which his fathers had been connected before him. He gave the College a charter and endowment, and helped to organize a Bohemian church for the Brethren, besides which there were, in the same town, two others in fellowship with them, the one Polish, the other German.

It is evident, therefore, that Lissa could take its place by the side of Jungbunzlau, or of any other former centre of the Unitas Fratrum in Bohemia and Moravia.

Comenius, in his *Manualnik*, published in Amsterdam, in 1658, says of this town: "Our chief place of refuge was Lissa, a city pointed out to us by the finger of God himself. It constituted a Segor, whither all godly Lots took their way, a Pella, whither the Lord brought us out of Jerusalem, when His judgments burst upon this city. At Lissa we enjoyed a public and peaceful worship, rejoicing like Jonah beneath his gourd, when it sheltered him from the great heat of the sun, and like Paul, when he was saved from shipwreck and hospitably entertained by the inhabitants of Malta. We opened our worship at Lissa, with souls famishing for the want of God's Word and with voices that rang out for joy. Many gentry and common people and nearly fifty of our ministers, were present."

Another principal seat in Poland was Schoeken, a domain belonging to Count Andrew Rej, who was a member of the Church. On many other estates, especially where the Polish branch had its parishes, settlements were begun. In some cases new church-edifices were built, for instance,

at Orzeszkowo and Sieroslaw. Besides these two, and those at Lissa, Schocken, and Ostrorog, we know of parishes at Wlodawa, Köbnitz, Kwilcy, Debnica, Cienin, Marszewo, Swierzynek, Karmin, Lasswitz, Mielecin, Kosminek, Lobsenz, Greboicin, Chomentowo, and Wolalaszkowska. These churches, however, many of which had existed before the immigration from Bohemia and Moravia, constituted only a small part of the Unitas Fratrum in Poland. There were many other parishes, whose names have not been preserved.

In Hungary the chief seat of the Church, was at Skalie, on the March, where John Efronius and Paul Vetterinus were stationed as pastors. Other parishes were found at Leduic, in charge of John Solinus; at Pucho, in charge of Laurinus; and at Saros-Patak, the residence of the Prince, where Bishop Comenius lived for a time. Many more existed in this country, whose names we do not know.

In Silesia we hear of Karolath, Kuttlau, Militsch, and Freistadt. I have not been able to find the names of any of the parishes in Prussia.

Including the original Polish churches, the Unitas Fratrum, after its destruction in Bohemia and Moravia, must have comprised at least one hundred and fifty to sixty parishes and as many ministers. It consisted, moreover, of two parts, the one the old Polish Province, which was now increased by the amalgamation with it of the Reformed of Great Poland, and the other the new province of the exiled Brethren from Bohemia and Moravia, with its churches scattered through Poland, Hungary, Silesia, and Prussia.

This second Province kept up the episcopacy as well as the first. Laurentius Justinus, Matthias Procop, Amos Comenius, and Paul Fabricius were all elected and consecrated at a Synod convened at Lissa, on the 6th of October, 1632. In short, the work of the Unitas Fratrum was carried on

until 1656, as vigorously and in the same way, as in former times. Many of the exiles, however, were greatly impoverished, and depended for help, in part, upon their Polish brethren, and, in part, upon their friends in other countries. It was, therefore, a God-send that two wealthy members left legacies to the Church, in this period of its history. In 1630, the Baroness Sadowsky willed to it over \$7,000; and, in 1638, Baron Kocourovsky his entire estate (Gindely, p. 532). Whether the *Unitas Fratrum*, in its new form, increased, as it did in its old seats, I cannot tell. I think it did not, more especially as it suffered in Poland, along with other Protestants, not a little, during this whole period, through the enmity of the Roman Catholics, and particularly of the Jesuits, who took away a number of its church edifices. On the other hand, I presume that it held its own. But even if it did not, its decrease was not rapid. Such a decrease began in a later period. The standing which it had, and the influence which it exercised, are shown by the prominent part it took in the so called *Colloquium Charitativum*, held at Thorn, in 1645, at the instance of King Vladislaus IV., by the Protestants and the Catholics. Bishop Buettner was one of the Presidents of that conference.\* Nor must we forget that, until the Peace of Westphalia, in 1648, the exiled Brethren were sustained by a strong hope of returning to their native land. This helped to give life and stability to their Church.

The foregoing narrative is based upon the sources offered by Lukasevich, Fischer, Gindely, and Krasinski. It establishes, I think, my second point. The Brethren, when driven out of Bohemia and Moravia, did not scatter and give up their church-organization, but renewed it, and, together

with the Brethren of the old Polish Province, constituted a new *Unitas Fratrum* which existed for twenty-nine years subsequent to 1627, and which numbered more members, more parishes, and more ministers, than the American and British Provinces of the Renewed *Unitas Fratrum* combined number at the present day.

It is an interesting fact that Cranz, in his *History of the Brethren* p. 85, acknowledges the existence of the Unity after 1627, saying: "In Poland, indeed, the exiles kept to the congregations of the Brethren." In the very next sentence, however, he falls into a grievous mistake, asserting that they were not allowed to organize in any other country. Holmes, too, in his *History* I p. 148, although he passes over the period we have been considering in a few lines, fully acknowledges that the Unity continued to exist

In order to still further substantiate the position here taken, I will adduce two extracts, the one from Gindely, the other from Lukasevich.

The former says, pp. 483 and 484: "As regards the Bohemian Brethren, they furnished to the emigration a contingent which, compared with others, was three or four times larger. This tenacious hold which they kept of the usages that had become dear to them and that had been incorporated, one might say, with their very flesh and blood, won for them the respect of foreigners. Nor did they scatter, like the Lutherans, into all the corners of Germany. Nor were they mostly destroyed in the Thirty Year's War, in which they took no part, whereas it carried off many of their countrymen, who did engage in it. On the contrary, they emigrated to Hungary, where the Protestant Confession was free, and to Poland and Prussia, whither their grandfathers, constrained by a like fate, had gone in 1547. The number of Brethren's churches in these countries amounted to about one hundred. They settled in col-

\* The *Geschichte der Alten Brüderkirche* contains a mere allusion to this important event, and seems to misunderstand the connection of the Brethren with the Colloquium.

onies, in various places, and soon developed a new centre for their government, so that the eyes of all, however far away they might be, might be directed to one spot. For the first time, the world at large had a picture of this compact mass of Brethren before its eyes."

Again he says, speaking of Comenius, p. 484: "Through its eloquent representative, this Church, which had thus far remained in obscurity"—a singular assertion, when we think of the prominent position the Brethren had occupied theretofore both in Germany and Poland—"now became known far and wide, and excited universal sympathy."

Lukaszevich (quoted by Fischer) says p. 191 &c.: "The majority of the exiles came to Great Poland. Raphael Leszczynski, Palatine of Belz and Lord of Lissa, and Andrew Rej, lord of Schocken, hospitably received on their domains several thousand of their Bohemian and Moravian brethren after a common faith. The rest settled in other baronial cities of Great Poland, where there were churches of their confession. The royal cities were closed to them, through the influence of the Catholic clergy. With these exiles more than one hundred ministers of the Bohemian Brethren arrived in Great Poland. Thus there arose in this country, in addition to the Polish Brethren's Church, a Bohemian-Moravian Church of the same confession, which had its own government and constitution. John Cyrill was their presiding Bishop. At Schocken and Lissa public services were held in the Bohemian language."

#### THE UNITAS FRATRUM FROM 1656 TO THE DEATH OF COMENIUS, IN 1670.

In the mysterious providence of God the Unitas Fratrum in its new form and new seats met with a disaster almost as terrible as the Anti-reformation in Bohemia and Moravia, and that was the beginning of its

end. It would lead me entirely too far to give the details of this part of its history, although they are very interesting and have never appeared in full in any of our Moravian works. Suffice it to say in brief, that, upon the death of Vladislaus IV, who was a humane and liberal monarch, his brother, John Casimir, a bigoted Catholic and a worthless man, was elected to the throne of Poland in 1648. It was a time of dire confusion and distress in the kingdom. A terrible revolt of the Cossaks, under Chmielnicki, was raging; and, in 1654, the Czar of Russia came to their aid. In the midst of such calamities John Casimir, who "was a pretender to the throne of Sweden," says Krasinski, "with that species of claim which the descendants of James II, had to the crown of Great Britain," mortally offended Charles X, when he received the Swedish crown from Queen Christina upon her retiring to Rome in 1654, by protesting, through the Polish ambassador, against such a transfer. The result was a declaration of war, on the part of Sweden, in the following year (1655). A Swedish army of 17,000 men immediately invaded Great Poland. Casimir was very unpopular. Many of his nobles and people openly espoused the cause of Sweden. This was the case among his Protestant subjects in particular, and, it seems undeniable, among the Brethren especially. The Swedish invaders treated the Catholics in a barbarous manner, although the accusations of some Polish writers that this was owing to the suggestions of the Protestants are false. Charles X himself appeared in the country. Casimir fled, and the greater part of Poland fell into the hands of Charles, who returned home, but left an army behind. Thereupon many of the Polish nobles, among whom Charles had become even more unpopular than Casimir, roused themselves from their lethargy, and began to raise troops, on their own responsibility, with which to drive out the Swedes. About

that time, Lissa had a Swedish garrison of several hundred men. Accordingly a body of the newly levied Polish troops, under Opalski, approached the town, on the 27th of April, 1656, and demanded its surrender. Lissa had grown to be a little city of ten thousand inhabitants, a majority of whom were members of the Brethren's Church. It is said that Bishop Comenius, who evidently still hoped for good from Sweden, in spite of his bitter disappointment in connection with the peace of Westphalia, persuaded the inhabitants and the garrison to defend the town to the last. Hence the Poles were refused admittance, and began an attack, but were defeated and had to retire. On the following day, April 28th, at 2 o'clock in the afternoon, intelligence was brought that another large body of Polish infantry was approaching the town. One account adds, that the new owner of the place, another Count Lecinski, a Roman Catholic, sent in a letter ordering the gates to be opened. In any case, a terrible and most unaccountable panic seized the inhabitants. They threw away their arms and fled with their families. By six o'clock in the evening the town was deserted. The Polish troops took possession of it, allowed the peasants of neighboring villages to plunder it, and then laid it in ashes. Thus fell the new and prosperous centre of the *Unitas Fratrum*, and every parish felt the shock. About the same time Czarnecki, a Polish General, marched into Great Poland with an army of Wallachians, who, in spite of his exertions, raged as fiercely against the Protestants, as the Swedes had raged against the Catholics. The Protestants fled in every direction; among them many Brethren, bishops, ministers, nobles, and common people. A number of the ministers, and not a few of the members, were killed by the Wallachians. Several of the former suffered martyrdom in excruciating forms at other hands. For nearly two years, no public services were held

in Poland, according to the ritual of the Brethren, or by any of their clergy.

From this year, therefore, the year 1656, and not the year 1627, dates the actual decline of the Church. But, even now, it was by no means extinct.

For, in the first place, the parishes in Hungary, Prussia, and Silesia remained; and, in the second, while many of its fugitive members, who fled to more distant countries, were thereafter lost to history, the majority of them found a refuge in the Silesian parishes, especially at Carolath, on the estates of Baron Schöneich, their fellow-member, and in other places of that Province, such as Ursk, the domain of Baron Kauniz, and at Militsch, whence, with few exceptions, they returned to Poland. In 1657, the nobles reappeared; in 1658 some of the ministers; and, in 1660, after the peace of Olive had been concluded between Sweden and Poland, nearly all the rest. The church at Lissa was rebuilt, and consecrated on the 18th of September, 1658; the college, too, was rebuilt and opened on the 19th of February, 1663.

Of the three bishops who were living at the time of the destruction of Lissa, Gertich died in Silesia; Comenius went to Holland, and settled at Amsterdam; but Buettner came back to Poland in 1664. He resided, first, at Schoecken, and then at Lissa; corresponded regularly with Comenius; held Synods again; and superintended the Church in every other respect. But it no longer flourished. Lissa, although rebuilt, was not the influential centre which it used to be. The Church in general, moreover, was greatly impoverished, so that large amounts of money were raised for its benefit, especially in England, where Hartman, in 1657, collected £5,900; many of its members had died of the plague, or been killed in the war; others fell away to the Catholic Church, and the number of such perverts continually increased; it lost its prestige; and its influence waned more and more.

Hence it was in this period, from 1656 to 1700, that the union, formed between the Brethren and the Reformed of Cujavia in 1627, began to change its character. The former now leaned upon the latter in all important matters; and the controlling element became the Reformed.

Nevertheless, while such a decline was unquestionably going on, the *Geschichte der Alten Brüderkirche* is grievously in error when it says, p. 376: "The Brethren's Unity now existed only in single fugitives, and in the few members of the Reformed churches of Great Poland, who had formerly been members of the Brethren's Church, and who maintained its memory in their hearts, or in outward church grades."

The account which I have given, on the authority of Lukaszewich and Fischer, of the restoration of the Church in Poland, after the war with Sweden, is a sufficient refutation of this view of the case. Several thousand Brethren returned to Poland, and reorganized their former churches. We find, moreover, that the parishes in Hungary, Prussia, and Silesia, clung to their independence with a tenacity which, as is well known, forms a prominent trait in the Bohemian character. They were absorbed by other churches in the same slow way as in Poland, and only because this country offered less and less of an ecclesiastical centre.

Nothing, however, proves, more conclusively, the continued existence of the Brethren's Unity in the period under consideration, than the jealous care with which the episcopal government was maintained.

It is generally supposed that bishops were consecrated, at this time, merely in order that the succession might not die out; as also that Comenius was the first to urge their appointment, and the chief agent in carrying it through. Both these suppositions are erroneous. As touching the latter, it was Bishop Buettner who, in a letter dated January 15, 1658, informing Comenius of

the death of Bishop Gertich, first of all, proposed that a successor should be elected. He says, among other things (*Rieger's B. H.* VI, p. 739 &c):

"I beseech you to consider the propriety, yea the necessity, of electing a third Senior, or Bishop, either from among the Bohemians or the Poles, in order that our regulations (unsere Ordnung) may be maintained, and in order that that which has been kept up in our Brethren's Church for two centuries, in uninterrupted succession, and which now centres in us two alone, may not, after our death, become extinct."

And when the war with Sweden, which prevented an immediate election, had come to an end, it was again Buettner who resumed the negotiations, and pressed the matter very earnestly.

The incorrectness of the other supposition is shown by the fact that two new bishops were elected by a Synod of the Brethren held at Mielecin, in Poland: the one, Peter Jablonsky, Comenius' son-in-law, for the Bohemian-Moravian branch, *in spem contra spem*, as the phrase ran; the other, Nicholas Gertich, for the Polish. They were consecrated by Bishop Buettner on the 5th of November, 1662, and both labored, after their consecration, as they had done before, within the communion of the Unitas Fratrum, although Gertich was, at the same time, the chaplain of the Duke of Liegnitz. Moreover, in the document which Comenius sent to the Synod giving his consent to their consecration, he expressly acknowledges the existence of churches of the Brethren in Poland and other countries. He says, *Rieger's B. H.*, VI, p. 744: "It does not become me and the Brethren of my people (the Bohemians) to envy you in Poland, because the Father of spirits chastises you in a milder way than us. On the contrary, we must bear witness to the fellowship of joy which exists between us, that you (*i. e.*, the ministers assembled at the Synod) are permitted to

remain in your churches in the fatherland, and to set them an example both in doctrine and life." Again, when speaking of the proposed election and consecration, he says: that both must be undertaken, "in order that, through the erection of new pillars for the ministry, those of your churches which still remain," namely, in Poland, "and those of ours which are scattered," namely, in Hungary, Prussia, and Silesia, "may be properly cared for." And yet, in spite of the document containing such statements, the *Geschichte der Alten Brüderkirche* says, p. 421: "The old episcopate of the Brethren's Unity descended from Comenius to his grandson, Jablonsky, (that is, Daniel Ernst), in the form of a Superintendent's office in the Reformed Church, set over the few Reformed parishes which remained in Great Poland. From the scantily gathered particulars of our narrative it becomes clear, that this episcopate, for the two generations that intervened between Comenius and David Nitschmann, was preserved in Poland among the Reformed, and not in the Polish branch of the *Unitas Fratrum*, and, further, that the trace and the memory of the ancient system of the Brethren showed themselves in ecclesiastical forms, such as the holding of Synods and the order of bishops, rather than in the spirit and acts of the men who were invested with the episcopacy." That this is an utter misconception of the true state of the case, needs no further argument.

THE UNITAS FRATRUM FROM THE DEATH  
OF COMENIUS, IN 1670, TO THE BEGIN-  
NING OF THE EIGHTEENTH  
CENTURY.

Bishop Comenius died, at Amsterdam, on the 20th of November, 1670. Did the Unity of the Brethren come to an end at that time? Or did it continue to exist even now?

The *Geschichte der Alten Brüderkirche*

says, p. 413: "The death of Comenius may be considered as the close of the history proper of the old Brethren's Unity, yea even of its last remnants. Between Comenius and Christian David, or Zinzendorf, there lies more than half a century, which can show no Brethren's congregation like that at Lissa, and no bearer of their ecclesiastical system like Comenius, but only isolated reminiscences of the former Unity: in the Polish branch efforts to keep up its ecclesiastical forms, in the Bohemian-Moravian, signs of spiritual life—both divine preparations for the renewal of the *Unitas Fratrum*." This authority, therefore, maintains that even the remnant of the Church disappeared and that only reminiscences of it remained.

Kindely, p. 536, asserts, substantially, the same thing, saying: "The death of Comenius was not only the death of the head of the Brethren's Unity, but also the end of the Unity itself. Thenceforth its single members were lost among the Lutherans, the Calvinists, and the Anglicans, according to the place of abode which they had chosen."

Even Daniel Ernst Jablonsky, in his letter of October 31, 1729, to Count Zinzendorf, seems to agree with these views, for he writes, *Kölbings Bischofthum d. B. U.* p. 24 and 25, "At the time of my father's death"—Bishop Peter Jablonsky, who died in the same year with Comenius,—"the number of the exiled Brethren had decreased very much, and the remnant of them in Poland had united with the Poles, the hope of a return to their native country being entirely dissipated."

I am again forced to dissent from these views, in so far as an absolute extinction of the Church is concerned. Jablonsky's language is rather vague. He probably means to enforce the fact, which is undoubted, that the *Unitas Fratrum* was dying out. He cannot mean that it was extinct. He must have known that there were a number of its churches in existence

in 1670. Gindely's view I deem worthless, because it is given at the end of his article on Comenius, and relates to a period of history which he has evidently not examined with any degree of attention. Having finished his subject, he jumps at a conclusion which invests his hero with a new and mournful interest. While the *Geschichte der Alten Brüderkirche* merely keeps up the argument which it began with the supposed extinction of the Brethren's Unity in 1627.

It is true, the few sources which we have say very little with regard to this period. Nevertheless we can gather enough to show that the *Unitas Fratrum* still existed and was represented by a number of independent churches in Poland, and, therefore, it is reasonable to add, by others in Hungary, Prussia, and Silesia also.

In the first place, Fischer says that the church at Lissa was kept up until the very end of the seventeenth century, John Tobian being its last minister (*Fischer II* p. 160). He says, again, that an independent organization, which seems to have consisted of a net-work of parishes numbering several thousand members, was maintained at Kurcewo until the end of the century, and was then relinquished in consequence of a general apostacy to the Roman Catholic Church (*Fischer II*, p. 334.) He speaks, too, of a number of noble families which were connected with the Brethren's Unity as late as 1686, and which consequently must have had parishes of this name on their estates. And, finally, he often makes other allusions to the existence of such churches in this period.

In the second place the view I am urging is established still more fully by the continued election and consecration of Bishops, who were not Reformed Superintendents, but stood at the head of the *Unitas Fratrum*, for whose welfare they faithfully labored, in spite of its decline.

Nicholas Gertich died in 1671. Conse-

quently the only Bishop who remained was John Buettner. He convened a Synod at Lissa, which body elected Adam Samuel Hartman. He was consecrated by Buettner on 28th of October, 1673. Hartman, a son of a minister of the Brethren, himself one of their ministers, who had labored all his life in their schools and churches, was a remarkable and very learned man, whose interesting biography, previous to his consecration, I must pass by. After he had been made a bishop, he had his seat at Lissa, but undertook long journeys in the interests of the Church. The most important of them was that to England in 1683. He brought with him a commission from the Synod of Lissa, dated February 16, 1683, appealing for aid. This appeal was sustained by the Archbishop of Canterbury and the Bishop of London, and resulted in a perpetual fund *for the education at Oxford of candidates for the ministry connected with the Brethren's Church*. Does this savor of an absolute extinction of that church? Hartman himself, moreover, received, with many flattering ceremonies, the honorary degree of Doctor of Divinity from the University of Oxford, and in the diploma he was entitled a bishop of the *Unitas Fratrum* (*Rieger VI* p. 738 and *Fischer II* p. 346). What is still more interesting, however, he consulted with the dignitaries of the Anglican Establishment about the propriety of consecrating a bishop of the Brethren for England, who was to look after those of them that had settled in that country. Daniel Ernst Jablonsky in his letter to Archbishop Wake gives an account of these negotiations. (*Acta Fratrum in Anglia* p. 114.) For some unknown reason they were eventually dropped. Does not all this presuppose that the Unity was still in existence?

At an earlier period, after the death of Bishop Buettner, February 2, 1675, John Zugehör, a minister of the Brethren, and laboring in their parishes, had been elected

to the episcopacy, and consecrated by Bishop Hartman on the 13th of August, 1676. Five years later Hartman died at Rotterdam, while on his way to visit England a third time, May 29, 1691. Meanwhile Bishop Zugehör had taken up his abode at Zychlin, and for twenty-two years superintended the remnant of the Brethren's Churches, the first fifteen years in conjunction with Hartman, and the last six in conjunction with Joachim Jülich. Jülich, like his predecessors, a minister of the Brethren, whose Synod elected him to the episcopacy in 1692, having been consecrated by Zugehör on the 26th of June, stood at the head of their churches for eleven years, and died on the 14th of November, 1703.

In as much, therefore, as all these men were real bishops of the Brethren, and governed what remained of them in the same way in which the bishops in other days had governed, and did this down to the beginning of the eighteenth century, we are forced to conclude that the *Unitas Fratrum* still existed, however weak it may have been.

#### THE PERIOD FROM 1700 TO 1722.

The history of the Hidden Seed proper opens with the new century. After 1700, we hear nothing of an independent Brethren's Church. Nor do we know anything of the bishops whom Daniel Ernst Jablonsky—elected by a Synod at Lissa in 1699,—consecrated, namely, Opitz, David and Paul Cassius, and Christian Sitkovins. They were, without doubt, what has been incorrectly asserted of their predecessors, Superintendents of the few remaining Reformed churches which constituted the legitimate outgrowth of the union between the Brethren and the Reformed effected in 1627.

Such churches still exist, and, as is well known, the Renewed Brethren's Church, in recent times, recommitted to them that

episcopal succession which it had obtained through them in 1735. On the 16th of June, 1844, their Superintendent, Dr. Siedler, was consecrated a bishop at Herrnhut, by Bishop Curie and others, and when he went over to the high church wing of the Lutheran Establishment, his successor, Dr. Göbel, was consecrated a bishop, at Gnadenberg, by Bishop Nitschmann and others.

Returning to the days of Bishop Joachim Jülich, we find that, from the close of his episcopate, in 1703, to the founding of Herrnhut, in 1722, extends an interval of only nineteen years. Therefore the last position which I have taken is likewise established. The period in which there were no independent churches whatever of the Ancient Brethren dwindles down to less than a quarter of a century.

It is, moreover, a very important fact, that there was at least something of a connection between the last independent Brethren's churches and those Moravian refugees through whom the *Unitas Fratrum* was renewed at Herrnhut. We know that the zeal which Martin Schneider, in Moravia, displayed, in holding private services among the descendants of the Brethren, was inflamed by the secret visits which some of their ministers from Skalic, in Hungary, paid to Zauchtenthal. And, in general, we may say that simultaneously with the final extinction of the independent churches began a new life from God among the Hidden Seed in Bohemia and Moravia. It was only four years after Bishop Jülich had passed away, that the Neissers were gathered around the death-bed of George Jaeschke, at Sehlen, and heard his prophetic anticipations of a renewal of the Church.

In conclusion, it must be clear, that we have far more reason for calling the Renewed Brethren's Church an organic continuation of the Ancient Church than our authorized Histories set forth. Not a quar-

ter of a century after the last parishes of the latter had disappeared in Poland, and while there were, perhaps, a few churches still lingering in Hungary, a hidden remnant of the descendants of the Brethren came forth from Moravia, and, enabled by the Spirit of the living God, gathered up the threads of a development that had been going on for nearly two centuries and a half, and presented to the world the wonderful spectacle of a dying church renewing its youth like the eagle's.

## NOTE.

[While this paper was going through the press, I was informed by my friend, Mr. William G. Malin, of Philadelphia, that his library contains a copy, in the original Polish, of *Lukaszewich's*, or *Lukaszewicz's*, *History of the Brethren in Poland*. In this form the work unfortunately remains for me a sealed book. There exists a German translation of it, but it is very rare. Mr. E. Steiger, of New York, a well-known publisher and importer, tried his best to secure it for me, but was unsuccessful. In the copy belonging to Mr. Malin, however, there was found, in manuscript, a German version of the title and contents, together with a brief extract from the Preface. From this extract it appears, that the author, Joseph Lukaszewicz, was the librarian of Count Raszynski, at Posen, and that the sources for his history were the following: The Archives of the Bohemian Brethren at Lissa; the Archives of several Polish noblemen; as also the Archives of a number of towns, churches, and villages of former domains in Great Poland. This information is very important, and shows that one of the chief sources from which I have drawn my argument in the above paper is a work whose authority is based upon original documents, and which must, therefore, be reliable. From the table of contents I see, that Lukaszewicz gives an alphabetical list of the churches of the Brethren in Great Poland, numbering seventy-nine; and also a list of all the Polish Bishops.]



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